



Latin American E-Letter

WASHINGTON STATE

Office of Trade & Economic Development

November 2000

Current Events

Free-Trade Negotiations with Chile

On November 29, President Clinton announced the launch of free-trade negotiations with Chile, hoping to bolster commercial ties between the two nations before leaving office in January. Chilean officials said they expected the negotiations to begin next week. Clinton said he has directed U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky to "assign a high priority to advancing negotiations." Earlier this year, Clinton announced a free-trade deal with Jordan and, like the accord between the United States and Jordan, the proposed pact with Chile would include provisions protecting labor and environmental standards.

Colombian Ambassador Visited Seattle

The Colombian Ambassador to the United States, Mr. Luis Alberto Moreno, visited Seattle this month during his successful business trip to the West Coast. Several Seattle-based companies met with the Ambassador to discuss business opportunities in Colombia. One of the topics discussed was "Plan Colombia" and how it will affect future business opportunities between Colombia and the state of Washington.

"Plan Colombia" is Colombia's integrated strategy to meet the most pressing challenges confronting the country--promoting the peace process, combating the narcotics industry, reviving the Colombian economy and strengthening the democratic pillars of Colombian society. Plan Colombia is a \$7.5 billion program. President Pastrana has pledged \$4 billion of Colombian resources and has called on the international community to provide the remaining \$3.5 billion to assist this effort. In response to Plan Colombia, President Clinton has signed legislation providing a \$1.3 billion package of assistance.

For additional information on "Plan Colombia" please visit: www.plancolombia.com

Mexican economy soaring

Mexico's economy continued its steaming pace of expansion, growing 7% year on year, and increasing pressure on the incoming government of Vicente Fox for a tight budget next year.

The rapid rate of growth has raised fears because annual inflation increased for the first time since February 1999. As a result, there is mounting pressure on Mr. Fox, who takes office as the president on December 1, to ensure that the budget prohibits the use of excess revenues next year for stimulative spending programs. Mr. Fox's first budget includes plans for a fiscal deficit of 0.5% of GDP.

For more information, please see: www.ft.com

Peruvian President Sworn In

Congressional president Valentin Paniagua was sworn in Wednesday, November 22nd as interim president of Peru. He immediately announced the appointment of former U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar as his prime minister and Cabinet chief. The presence of Perez de Cuellar, U.N. Secretary-General from 1982-92, brought instant credibility to the new government of national unity and reconciliation that will steer Peru to April 8 elections and hand over power next July 28.

New Latin American Director at OTED

The Washington State Office of Trade and Economic Development recently named Tania Fernández de Castro as Director for Latin America. Tania has stated that her main priority is to personally assist small and medium-size businesses to gain access into the Latin American region. Tania is originally from México and moved to the United States approximately fourteen years ago. Previously, Tania was the Regional Director for Latin America at Green River Community College and, most recently, she assisted in the organization and execution of the Washington State Business Mission to Mexico in October of this year.

You may contact Tania by email: taniaf@cted.wa.gov, phone: (206) 956-3186 or by fax: (206) 956-3151

Upcoming Events

International IT Trade Show

COMDEX Brazil, one of the largest software and IT trade shows in the world, will take place in Sao Paulo, Brazil from August 28th-31st. OTED will be leading a Washington State Pavilion for companies within this sector. For registration information, please contact Tania Fernández de Castro at: taniaf@cted.wa.gov or Karen Bronson at: karenbr@cted.wa.gov

Trade Mission to South America

OTED is in the process of developing a trade mission to South America. Countries currently being considered are Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Argentina. The mission is being planned for the beginning of September 2001. For more information, please email Tania Fernández de Castro at: taniaf@cted.wa.gov

Quick Facts

Internet Usage Climbs

In 1995, Internet usage was near 1.4 million. In the span of 5 years that number has increased to nearly 30 million throughout the continent by the end of 2000

Internet population by country 1995-2005 ('000)

	1995(a)	1999(a)	2000(b)
Argentina	52	1,413	2,923
Brazil	522	7,830	12,659
Chile	161	1,066	1,571
Colombia	118	947	1,917
Mexico	290	2,517	4,651
Peru	9	462	614
Venezuela	13	628	1,200
Rest of LA	189	2,419	4,157
TOTAL	1,353	17,282	29,694

For additional information on OTED or any of its activities, please visit our website at: **www.trade.wa.gov** If you do not wish to continue receiving the **Latin American E-Letter**, please send an email to: **theamericas@cted.wa.gov**
